

i always wanted to write a letter
and say, "jack, we never said anything,
but i always felt ...
i mean i always wanted you to know that ..."

i'm afraid i may have written that letter.
i drink so much and sleep so late
i have trouble distinguishing daydreams from nightmares.
if i sent it, i hope it didn't muddy the waters.

MAYBE I COULD GO BACK AND HELP HIM SHOVEL SNOW!
SHOOT THE BALONEY ABOUT POLITICS!
DOUBLE-DATE!
oh for jesus' sake.

3.

the house on hawley street was built by
granfather kindelen with his own hands.
he sired fourteen kids in it,
of which i am the only next-of-kin.

the house is three stories
with a porch and a cellar.
robinson jeffers would have liked that house
ezra pound would have liked that house.

the neighborhood is black now.
one night a man tried to rob my uncle jack.
jack didn't fell him with one swoop,
but he didn't call the cops either.

he just threatened to make a fuss
and refused to hand over his wallet.
the man went away.
one small triumph for the shanty irish.

4.

my eldest aunt bought me
a spiral pad when i was ten
to write the family history.
elizabeth, here's the first page.

hey, hank

you know that barmaid
in the 49er tavern
where we stopped to have a beer

before your reading?
and later you wrote me

"watch out for the one

with the ass
and the hips
and the poise,

it may be
only the ass
is real?"

well, you were right
as usual,
just listen:

i was sitting in the bar
last friday
getting drunk and trying

desultorily to put the make on her
(there was a football game on soon
that i was pretty sure

i'd rather watch than hassle with her)
but i told her anyway
"you know you have a secret admirer."

her curiosity aroused, i explained
about this famous poet
who had come in for half an hour

and had made a point
of mentioning her
in a letter

and she said, "oh, wow!
grooooooovy!
right on!!!"

i hadn't meant for her
to take it
quite that hard

but she continued, "god, you never know
the great things going on around you,
wow, you've really made my day!"

so i said, "well, you know
that you're a pretty girl,
it's natural that he

or anybody should be taken
with you."
but that wasn't what she meant at all:

"oh no," she said,
"i'm sure it wasn't that;
i'm sure he sensed

something ... intangible
about me!"
i suppose

i should have set her straight
as to just exactly which intangible
it was you sensed

but when i shit on people
i feel bad about it sometimes
in the morning.

so i just said,
"yeah, i'm sure you're right,"
and got home for the second quarter.

jesus christ, though, it's enough
to make you wonder why we all
don't just turn queer.

death of a lawnmower

i am a toad;
consequently poets are forever trying
to run over me with their power mowers,
presumably so they will have
something to write about.

one tried yesterday,
but i sprang a little surprise on him:
i ate his foot off;
then i ate the lawnmower.

i'm curious to see how he will work that one
into his alexandrine strophies.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach, CA

NOTED AS RECEIVED:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::
Roberto Sosa's Un Mundo Para Todos Dividido, Manuel Cofino
Lopez's La Ultima Mujer y el Proximo Combate, Manuel Esp-
inoza Garcia's La Politica Economica de los Estados Unidos
Hacia America Latina Entre 1945 y 1961 fm. casa de las
americas, G Y Tercera, Vedado, La Habana, Cuba. ¶ Yolanda
Bedregal's Antologia Minima fm. Casilla 149, La Paz, Bo-
livia. ¶ Marco Ramirez Murzi's El Regreso del Agua fm.
author, AP. 1821, Caracas 101, Venezuela.